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SUBJECT: Lebanon: Media Reaction, June 6, 2008

Atmospherics:

The Lebanese press noted that the Future Movement, led by MP Saad Hariri, succeeded in making security in Beirut the priority and not the process of forming a new government; the security section of the Doha Agreement is taking precedence over the political section. The press also noted that the opposition accused the majority of "blowing the issue of security in Beirut out of proportion."

Selected Headlines:

"Fears Increase of Governmental Vacuum," pro-opposition Al-Akhbar

"Who Curbs Tension and Re-brings to the Surface the Doha Agreement?"
Arab nationalist As-Safir

"Siniora Delivers Draft of Unity Cabinet Lineup to Sleiman"
English-language, Beirut-based The Daily Star

Block Quotes:

"Suleiman's Program to Save Lebanon: A Lebanon Liberated from Arms and Hegemony: The Truth About Syria's and Hizballah's Relations with the 'Respected President', an editorial by Abdel Al-Karim Abou Al-Nasr in moderate, anti-Syrian An-Nahar (6/6):

"...It is true that Suleiman describes his relationship with Syria and its President...as excellent. Suleiman, however, is not a pro-Syrian President, and was never among the group of senior Army officers who have total and blind allegiance to Syria. A prominent European diplomat disclosed that Suleiman was not really Syria's choice for a Lebanese President because he never presented any prior commitments to the Syrian Regime. ...On the contrary, Syrian officials resented several positions he took since PM Hariri was assassinated, ...particularly the fact that he did not stop the March 14 demonstration which exploded in the Syrians' face. ...Suleiman does not only aim at managing the Lebanese crisis, but also wants to work on ending it. He wants to deal with Hizballah's weapons..., supervise the operation of correcting relations with Syria; ...work on the economic situation; and ...participate with the government and the Parliament in giving governmental institutions the credibility and consideration they deserve..."

"Election Lies," an editorial by Sateh Nouredine in Arab nationalist As-Safir (6/6):

"We assume that Obama's speech before AIPAC...has removed a lot of

dreams and illusions about this rising American star... This Zionist speech, which is one of Obama's strongest speeches, has surprised many...who thought that Obama will save them from the worst and most dangerous U.S. Administrations for Arabs and Moslems. ...This yearning for revenge from the Bush Administration and its possible successor McCain...has stopped Arabs from looking closely at Obama's identity, his speeches, and his thinking. ...In his speech before AIPAC...Obama looked like any politician who is in the middle of a campaign, and who resorts to lies and tricks. The language he used did not reveal his opportunist character...but rather disclosed his decision to move to another stage in his battle -- which is to focus on attracting American Jewish votes. ...This presidential candidate will work soon according to the beat of the American political institution, and will forget about what he said about withdrawal from Iraq, and even what he said about Jerusalem as a united capital for Israel..."

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